

5158 FORGE ROAD
OXFORD, PA 19363

February 21, 2005

MR. JIM RIDDLE, NOSB CHAIRMAN

Dear MR. RIDDLE:

I am an organic dairy farmer in southern Chester County, Pennsylvania. We are a family-operated grass farm and milk approximately 120 holstein and cross-bred cows.

I strongly support the Livestock Committee Pasture Requirement recommendations and feel that it must be mandated as a permanent part of the requirements for organic dairy certification, regardless of the geographic location or size of the dairy operation. I give the following reasons for this requirement:

1. I know from experience on my farm that true pasture is a key to healthy, long-lived cows, putting them in the environment where they can function naturally.
2. I also believe that the organic consumer who drives the whole organic program believes that he is getting dairy products that are derived from cows having significant access to grass pasture and he is many times aware of the excellent health benefits involved with the consumption of these food products. To undermine this confidence would be the undoing of the very organic program.
3. I have also seen a measurable change on my farm with regards to the environmental impact of grass farming, natural manure application, and other positive aspects of a pasture based dairy system.
4. The drastic decrease in fossil fuel consumption and the associated carbon dioxide emissions also are key concerns in the organic program.

I am also a member of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance and support the additional recommendations that NODPA has put forth, including an objective definition of "Pasture", minimum pasture consumption requirements for dairy animals and maximum stocking rate allowances.

I urge the NOSB to adopt a strong and enforceable recommendation on Pasture Access making it a permanent part of the Organic Dairy System Plan.

SINCERELY,

RODNEY S. MARTIN
BRIDGE VIEW DAIRY